inspection, testing of samples and evaluation of technical competence. After grant of certification of quality of the products certified is checked through regular surveillance on the manufactures set-up and testing of samples taken from the factory as well as from the market. The products are regularly tested in the Bureau's own laboratory as well as laboratories recognized for this purpose.

ii) **Quality Systems Certification Scheme** - Under this scheme product manufacturing firms as well as service providers are granted licences for using the Quality Systems Certification Mark of the Bureau after their quality management systems have been found to be conforming to ISO 9001 or ISO 9002 International Standards. After grant of licence surveillance visits are carried out regularly to ensure that the licensed organizations are maintaining the norms required under these standards. Under this scheme, licences have also been granted for certification of food safety to those manufacturers who have installed check points in the food chain according to Indian Standard IS 15000: 1998 Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points.

iii) **Environment Systems Certification** - Under this scheme organizations who maintain environment protection norms according to ISO 14000 series of International Standards are granted licences.

iv) **Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery** - Under this scehem the BIS certifies the jewellers for purity of Gold and also gives recognition to Assaying and Hallmarking Centres that conduct the testing for purity of gold.

v) **Certification of Foreign Manufacturers and Indian Importer's Scheme** - Under this scheme the quality of goods being imported into India can be certified either by granting licences to manufacturers situated in a foreign country or to importer situated in India. This scheme operates in a manner similar to BIS Product Certification Scheme.

CAG's criticism of foodgrain prices

2393. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has criticized the Centre's policy on prices of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to set right the shortcomings pointed out by the CAG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U. V. KRISHNAM-RAJU): (a) to (c) The C&AG in its Report 2000-01 made certain observations on prices of foodgrains. The main observations are the following:

(i) The price movements show a policy tilt towards producers *vis a vis* purchasers;

(ii) The inevitable increase in subsidies in the short run and in Central Issue Prices thereafter reduced the margins between the PDS prices and the market prices which led to the decline in offtake of foograins in some years;

(iii) Despite foodgrains availability in the public domain, the aggregate release of foodgrains remained static between 1992-99;

(iv) The procurement price for wheat was higher, and it is certainly not to the advantage of the consumer;

(v) The leakages and inefficiencies at the level of Procurement and Release Agencies and also some other costs added at State level increase the prices for consumers as a result of which 60 to 70 per cent ration card holders did not/do not purchase rice or wheat from the fair price shops.

The Central Issue Prices (CIP) of wheat and rice are fixed by the Government mainly to help the poorest & the disadvantaged segments of our population. As such, under the TPDS, wheat and rice are issued to BPL families at subsidized rates. The CIPs fixed for APL families also contain an element of subsidy. Therefore, CIPs are not at par with the open market prices which depend on free play of demand and supply. However, the economic cost of wheat and rice are kept in mind while fixing the CIPs.

The Government has taken various measures to increase the offtake as per the enclosed Statements.

Statement

Measures taken by the Government of India to increase offtake of foodgrains to liquidate the excess stocks.

1.4.2000

(i) The entitlement for BPL families was raised from 10 kg. per family per month to 20 kg. per family per month from April 2000.

2.11.2000

(ii) It was decided to make foodgrains available at CIPs for BPL families for all welfare schemes, including SC/ST/ OBC hostels scheme, implemented by the various Ministries of the Government of India.

(iii) It was decided to make foodgrains available at BPL rates for allotment to State Governments @5kg. per head per month for covering categories of indigent people living in welfare institutions, such as beggar homes, orphanages/Nari Niketans, etc. sponsored by the State Governments and the concerned administrative Ministry of the Government of India.

(iv) A decision was taken to make foodgrains available at BPL rates for development schemes (where the beneficiaries belong to the BPL category) implemented by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), sponsored by the State Governments and endorsed by the administrative Ministry in the Government of India, as also by international organizations like the World Food Programme.

(v) FCI was permitted to make wheat available from the Central Pool for the purpose of export. A quantity of 42.96 lakh tonnes of wheat has been exported so far.

1.12.2000

(vi) The allocation of foodgrains for Below the Poverty Line (BPL) families was revised *w.e.f.* 1.12.2000 on the basis of population projections of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000. As a result, the number of BPL families eligible for subsidised foodgrains has increased from 5.96 crores families to 6.52 crore families.

25.12.2000

(vii) The Antyodaya Anna Yojana was announced for the one crore poorest of the poor BPL families. The scheme is now under implementation in all States/UTs. Each of the Antyodya families is given 25kg. of foodgrains Rs. 2 per kg. wheat and Rs. 3 per kg. for rice.

1.1.2001

(viii) The Food for Work Programme was introduced in eight drought affected States in January, 2001 by the Ministry of Rural Development. Under FFW the foodgrains are allocated to State Governments free of cost. The programme has been subsequently extended to cover floods and other national calamities. From January, 2001 till 7.3.2002, 39.33 lakh tonnes of foodgrains under FFW have been allotted to 11 States.

29.1.2001

(ix) The Government of India allocated one lakh MTs of foodgrains for distribution in the earthquake-affected areas of Gujarat on 29th January, 2001.

1.5.2001

(x) It was decided to make additional allocation of foodgrains at BPL rates to drought affected States for distribution to all the drought affected families (BPL & APL) 20 kg. per family per month for a period of three months in the current financial year. The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have already been allocated additional foodgrains aggregating 19.53 lakh tonnes. The Govt. of Bihar has been given additional allocation of 1.80 lakh MTs of wheat at BPL rate for flood relief.

2.5.2001

(xi) It was decided to permit FCI to offer rice from the Central Pool for the purpose of export. The quantity of rice lifted for export upto 25.2.2002 during the current financial year is 16.46 lakh tonnes.

10.7.2001

(xii) It was decided to make available 20 lakh tonnes of wheat from the Central Pool for the purpose of export of wheat products.

12.7.2001

(xiii) The entitlement for BPL families was raised from 20 kg. per family per month to 25 kg. per family per months.

(xiv) The Central Issue Price (CIP) of wheat and rice was retained for BPL and reduced for the APL category as under, which will be valid till 31.3.2002:

(Rs. per quintal)

	BPL	APL
Wheat	415	610
Rice	565	830

15.8.2002

(xv) The Prime Minister announced the Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) on 15th August, 2001. The Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development on 25.9.2001. Under the programme, it is envisaged to utilize 50 lakh MTs of foodgrains every year.

23.3.2002

With a view to further liquidate the stocks of foodgrains, the Government has approved the following proposals:

(i) To reduce the APL, CIPs by Rs. 100 per quintal in respect of rice and wheat for a period of three months.

(ii) To fix the scale of issue for APL, BPL and Antyodaya households 35 kg. per household per month and increase allocations to States / UTs accordingly.

(iii) To fix the scale of issue for all welfare institutions and hostels uniformly 15 kg. per head per month and make an additional allocation equal to 5% of the BPL allocation of States / UTs at BPL CIPs on this account.

(iv) To make open market sales of 50 lakh MTs of wheat and 10 lakh MTs of rice at prices to be determined by the existing High Level

Committee of the FCI. FCI may be authorised to sell the stocks in the open market either through auction in prefixed lots or by fixation of sale prices keeping in view the prevailing market conditions.

(v) To increase export of wheat and rice including lustre lost wheat, provide WTO compatible subsidies for exports of wheat, wheat products and rice in accordance with the decision taken on 5th February, 2002.

(vi) To fix no quantitative restrictions on the exports of rice, wheat and wheat products, subject to the condition that the stocks in the Central Pool will not be lower than the buffer stock of 243 lakh MTs (100 lakh MTs of rice and 143 lakhs MTs of wheat) at any point of time.

(vii) To enter into counter trade and / or extend commodity assistance in the form of foodgrains to other countries on terms to be decided on a case-to-case basis.

The decisions at S.No. (ii) to (vii) above will be valid upto 31.3.2003.

Research on consumer behaviour

2394. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are promoting research on consumer behaviour in order to identify ways to make consumption patterns more sustainable;

(b) if so, the specific areas of thrust and the details of research conducted;

(c) whether any regulatory mechanism exist in the country to protect consumer and economic measures to promote sustainable consumption;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government have in place economic measures such as taxes or subsidies that promote sustainable consumption; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION